

## 2018 WASTE PREVENTION & RECYCLING REPORT



### Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

June 13, 2019

Councilmember Lisa Herbold  
Chair, Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development & Arts  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmember Herbold and Committee Members,

In June 2019, the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) members had the opportunity to review SPU's Draft of the 2018 Annual Waste Prevention and Recycling Rate Report. We commend SPU for altering the name of this annual report to highlight the importance of waste prevention in the City's overall materials management strategy. SPU continues to work towards its goal of 70% landfill diversion by 2022, and SWAC strongly encourages sustaining this effort.

In 2018, the City achieved a 56.5% diversion rate, which is a 0.5% decrease from 2017. While City recycling rates trend an increase over the years, the 2018 recycling rate is still short of the 2022 goal. A few factors likely influence Seattle's most recent recycling rate: market effects from China's Blue Skies Initiative, the decrease in weight for many recyclables, and education and outreach to Seattle's diverse population.

To effectively continue towards the 70% diversion goal, SWAC recommends that SPU focus on the three sectors below:

#### Self-haul

Given that recycling rates at self-haul facilities (10.4% for 2018) are the lowest of any sector and furthest from the 2022 goal, we recommend evaluation of further opportunities to recover materials for recycling or reuse at the transfer stations.

#### Multifamily Recycling

Multifamily recycling rates have lagged behind single family recycling rates for many years. We affirm SPU's efforts in 2018 to engage multifamily building owners and managers in making recycling accessible to all residents, and we recommend continuing this outreach to include medium and small size multifamily buildings. Further, we affirm consideration of building code requirements for recycling infrastructure to be designed into new buildings.

#### Construction & Demolition (C&D)

SPU calculates the C&D sector in a separate recycling rate which has a 70% diversion goal by 2020. C&D activities continue at historically high levels for the City. While bans of heavy materials such as concrete have helped raise the recycling rate for C&D, SWAC recommends further opportunities to increase diversion:

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- Strengthen recycling and reuse options for C&D materials at self-haul facilities. In 2019, there is opportunity to incorporate reusable building materials collection into the STS II facility design, providing a market for salvaged materials.
- Strengthen the current salvage assessment requirement for demolitions to incentivize actual salvage for reuse.
- Add a requirement for deconstruction (or minimum recovery for reuse) where high recovery potential is identified.

With new and historic challenges influencing materials management, we advise that SPU reconsiders the metrics for waste prevention and generation to help the City achieve its diversion goal and to engage a broader audience. SPU should continue to track, measure, and set goals around waste generation per capita, as it is the single most effective measure of waste reduction efforts. SWAC supports the continuation of waste prevention programs such as Love Food, Stop Waste, E-Cycle WA, Secure Medicine Return, and Food Rescue Innovation Lab. In addition, SPU should continue to play an active role in supporting legislation that bolsters waste prevention strategies and product stewardship policies, like the ban on single-use plastic straws and utensils.

SWAC recommends SPU's ongoing participation and support of the regional Responsible Recycling Task Force and the short and long-term goals it has set out to achieve, especially removing plastic bags from curbside recycling and harmonizing recycling programs regionally to minimize contamination and confusion.

SWAC supports SPU's 2018 achievements and efforts in integrating race and social justice and resiliency frameworks into their planning processes, programs, and projects. SWAC recommends the continued expansion of community collaboration, specifically with underrepresented and marginalized communities in developing relevant and relatable waste prevention knowledge, education, transcreated resources, and economic development opportunities, such as the Waste-Free Communities grant. SWAC encourages the continued use of SPU's Community Connections in the planning process across all sectors.

Thank you for considering our comments and we look forward to providing additional feedback upon your request.

Sincerely,



Dirk Wassink: Chair

Alessandra Pistoia: Vice Chair

SWAC is one of Seattle Public Utilities' Community Advisory Committees. Its members are appointed by the SPU CEO/General Manager. It is administered and staffed by SPU. This letter reflects the opinions of Committee Members, independent of SPU.

Cc: Bruce Harrell, President, Seattle City Council  
Sage Jackson, Strategic Advisor, Waste Prevention & Product Stewardship  
Sheryl Shapiro, Program Manager, Community Advisory Committees